

# SPRINGSTIMES

Your Sandy Springs News Source



## Greetings!

Cities around us are cutting staff and services. Atlanta has reduced its staff by hundreds of employees. Gov. Perdue has ordered all state agencies to cut expenditures by 6 percent, and more cuts may be coming. How is the City of Sandy Springs doing financially? I am happy to report that so far we are not encountering major problems fiscally, but the signs do point to reduced revenue flows in the months ahead.

Indeed, through the first quarter of this fiscal year (July through September 2008), our total revenues exceed by \$408,000 what we had programmed for this period in our annual budget. And on the expenditures side, in this first quarter we spent \$1.6 million less than we had budgeted for the period. Thus, in a total General Fund budget of \$99 million, after the first quarter, we are approximately \$2 million to the good.

The pie charts (on page 4) detail the favorable and (unfavorable) balances for both revenue sources and expenditures by departments. A favorable amount means we took in more of that type of revenue than budgeted for the quarter, or we spent less per department than expected. An (unfavorable) amount means we received less revenue than expected, or spent more than budgeted for the period.

But not all is roses. The State of Georgia has experienced a drop of at least 8 percent in sales tax collections in anticipated revenues so far in this fiscal year. Our sales tax collections (which is a per capita share of Fulton County's total local option sales tax) has shown no decrease so far. The primary reason for this is that we budgeted 4 percent less for this fiscal year than last year. This was an example of us recognizing the pending economic crisis and confronting this economic reality as part of the budget process, which reflects the prudent and conservative budgeting approach adopted by City Council.

We have experienced a slight drop in business and occupational taxes, but most of these are not due until after the first of the year. The tax receipts from this revenue source are expected to show a major drop because the payments are tied to the revenues that businesses receive, which in this economic climate are bound to fall.

The biggest open question is property taxes, which comprise 29 percent of total budgeted revenues for the City of Sandy Springs. At this writing, the City's property taxes that were included in the Fulton County bills that were payable by October 20<sup>th</sup> have not yet been transmitted to the City. We do expect to receive less than budgeted, primarily because of the large number of appeals by commercial property owners regarding their higher 2008 tax assessments. This situation will cost the City somewhere between \$2.5-\$3 million in lost revenues for this year.

As would be expected in this housing and construction crisis, the permit fees are down considerably, even though the budget had already built in a 21 percent reduction. Other revenues tied to real estate (transfer tax and recording fees) are also down.

*Continued on page 4*

## Hammond Park Master Plan Process Well Underway

More than 300 surveys were returned to help the City of Sandy Springs create a Master Plan for Hammond Park. Two public input meetings were held in September, two in October and one in November. Morning and evening sessions were available so the public could have additional access to the meetings and voice their opinions. Public attendance has increased from seven at the first meeting to about 30 at the last meeting.

Three conceptual Master Plans were presented to the steering committee and by consensus narrowed to one. This Master Plan for Hammond Park contains numerous program elements and includes a multi-use recreation building, aquatic facility, central civic space, splash pad, athletic field, two outdoor basketball and tennis courts, playground areas, picnic shelters, restroom, pedestrian path system, a parking lot off of Glenridge Drive and also a parking deck on the property.

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# Sult Named New Police Chief



*Chief Terry Sult took the reins of the Sandy Springs Police Department on October 27<sup>th</sup>. He will focus on community policing and progressive initiatives.*

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, Terry L. Sult was named the new police chief for the City of Sandy Springs. He came from the city of Gastonia, N.C., where he was the chief of police. He began his duties with the Sandy Springs Police Department on October 27<sup>th</sup>.

"I am confident that Terry Sult will lead us effectively and collaboratively. He is an innovative chief with unquestionable integrity. His leadership will be a great asset for Sandy Springs," said City Manager John McDonough. "I chose Chief Sult not only for his successes but also based on impeccable references."

A career law enforcement officer, Sult has a long history of collaboration and building multijurisdictional relationships. He has worked closely with both business and in diverse communities. More than 30 years of his policing career was devoted to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department. Sult believes that the Sandy Springs approach to local government is consistent with the philosophy of management

preferable in effective policing. "The focus of the police department must be preventing crime, solving problems and enforcing laws," he said. "Sandy Springs appears to embrace this philosophy on a citywide basis."

A candidate pool of 62 first went through a rigorous paper review resulting in Sult as the top candidate. He holds an MBA from Pfeiffer University and an undergraduate degree in criminal justice. He has held a multitude of police responsibilities and has extensive training in all aspects of law enforcement.

When asked about his leadership style, Chief Sult wrote that he is a team builder that empowers ideas and decision-making while holding officers accountable. He is experienced as an approachable, open and positive leader who has a willingness to listen and learn as well as work with the community. He believes his strengths are in relationship building.

Among Chief Sult's most significant accomplishments are the development of a street drug interdiction unit, implementation of a community problem-oriented policing system, crime reduction and strengthening cooperation among multiple jurisdictions. He receives the city benefits including a salary of \$143,500.

"Chief Sult will lead the Sandy Springs Police Department into a strong, cohesive force, and he brings a host of new and progressive initiatives to engage the total community toward a reduction of crime in our City. He is an excellent choice for a City such as ours that embraces new approaches and ideas," said Mayor Eva Galambos.



*Since the City's inception, the Public Works Dept. has paved 20 miles of streets in conjunction with GDOT through the LARP paving program.*

## LARP Paving Reaches 20-Mile Mark

For the third year in a row, the City of Sandy Springs has teamed up with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) for the Local Assistance Roads Program (LARP). This program allows us to resurface many area roads. This year, The City paved 4.85 miles of roads bringing the total mileage for all of the LARP projects to 20.

This year's roads that were paved are: Fox Ridge Road, River Hall Court, West Battery Place, Glenair Drive, Old Powers Ferry Road from Northside Drive to Dupree Drive, Duncourtney Drive, Riley Place, North Mill Court, Merlendale Court, Chestnut Hall Lane, Hilderbrand Drive, Central Park West, Chaparral Drive from Chaparral Place to Chevron Drive, Read Lane from Kayron Drive to Garber Drive, Aberdeen Drive and Mystic Drive.

LARP paving is different from Capital Improvement Program (CIP) paving because it is funded and supported from GDOT. CIP paving is strictly funded through the budgeting process using City funds. The roads were chosen based on ratings done by an IMS study at the City's inception. Each year, the Public Works Department submits a list of roads to GDOT who makes the ultimate determination on which roads are chosen for the program based on their independent inspections.



*City of Sandy Springs' new holiday decorations are along Roswell Road.*

# Eleven New Firefighters Graduate From Academy, Join SSFRD

Sandy Springs Fire Rescue graduated 11 new firefighters on December 10<sup>th</sup>. These firefighters have obtained national certifications in Firefighter I, Haz-Mat Awareness/Operations and National Incident Management System (NIMS) 100. In addition, these new firefighters received certifications in vehicle extrication, search and rescue, structural fire control and handling of flammable and combustible liquids.

All of the new firefighters participated in more than 300 total hours of Fire/EMS-related training, which is three times the state requirement. This training was conducted at the Georgia Fire Academy, utilizing both state and Sandy Springs' instructors.

These firefighters learned how to advance hoses, climb ladders, perform searches and suppress fires. Along with performing fire-related training, the firefighters also participated in a physical fitness program.

Our new firefighters performed in some of the most physically enduring classes offered in the state. This firefighter education and training prepares them to be ready to serve and protect the residents of Sandy Springs beginning from the moment they graduate.



*Sandy Springs Fire Rescue's newest recruits hit the streets on December 10<sup>th</sup>. They have had 300 hours of training—more than three times the state requirement.*

## City Embarks on Drain Marker Program

One of the primary sources of pollution in our streams is non-point pollution, which is pollution coming from many undefined locations and often in small quantities. Most people do not realize that their daily activities, such as blowing leaves into the street, lead to the pollution of our streams. The public also may not know that when it rains, pollution on the ground is washed into the drains, and these drains are directly connected to our streams.



Therefore, the City of Sandy Springs is embarking on a drain marker program where our goal is to label all 4,000 catch basins in the city. Our hope is to involve residents in helping the City while also educating residents and business owners about stormwater



*The City of Sandy Springs is embarking on a drain marker program where our goal is to label all 4,000 catch basins in the City so people know that what goes down the drains has a direct impact on aquatic life.*

pollution. Through a comprehensive communications campaign, we will be asking residents to contact the City to obtain markers they attach to catch basins that say, "No Dumping, Drains to Stream." Volunteers will receive a map showing the location of catch basins in the area they wish to work and pamphlets to distribute in the neighborhood/area.

The volunteers will be asked to return the map showing which catch basins they marked. The returned map will be used to update an overall map of the City showing which catch basins have been labeled. The updated map will also be posted to the City's Web site periodically.

The City will work with volunteers, volunteer organizations, home owners associations and schools to accomplish this task. If you are interested in labeling your neighborhood or specific area, please call 770-730-5600 and ask to speak with Christine Buttram.





The compilation of all development-related regulations within one ordinance allows for more efficient use by the building and development community.

## New Development Regulations Ordinance Brings Separate Ordinances Together

On September 16, 2008, the Mayor and City Council approved the new Development Regulations Ordinance. The Ordinance serves as a compendium of the City's current requirements from a number of separate ordinances, including the Subdivision Regulations, sections of the Zoning Ordinance, Driveway Manual and Sidewalk Master Plan. Specific additions to the Ordinance included the following provisions:

- 180 Day Expiration Clause for Land Disturbance permits;
- Well and Septic Tank Ordinance;
- Addressing Provisions;
- Tiered Retaining Wall Ordinance; and
- Sidewalk Master Plan.

The compilation of all development-related regulations within one ordinance allows for more efficient use by the building and development community, as well as staff. A copy of the Ordinance is posted on the City's Web site and all submittals received starting on September 17, 2008, must meet the requirements of the Development Regulations Ordinance.

The Ordinance may be found at [http://files.sandyspringsga.org/comdev\\_misc/DevelopmentRegs\\_091608.pdf](http://files.sandyspringsga.org/comdev_misc/DevelopmentRegs_091608.pdf).

*Mayor's letter, continued from cover*

The major reason that expenditures are below budgeted amounts for the quarter is staff vacancies have not yet been filled. This is a normal occurrence as employees leave, and it takes time to fill their slots.

Two State actions point to a further reduction in revenues. The State Local Assistance Program, which pays for some paving of local streets, will be cut. Also, the Governor has announced that the State credits on homeowner property taxes are likely to be eliminated, which would reduce City of Sandy Springs property taxes by \$603,833.

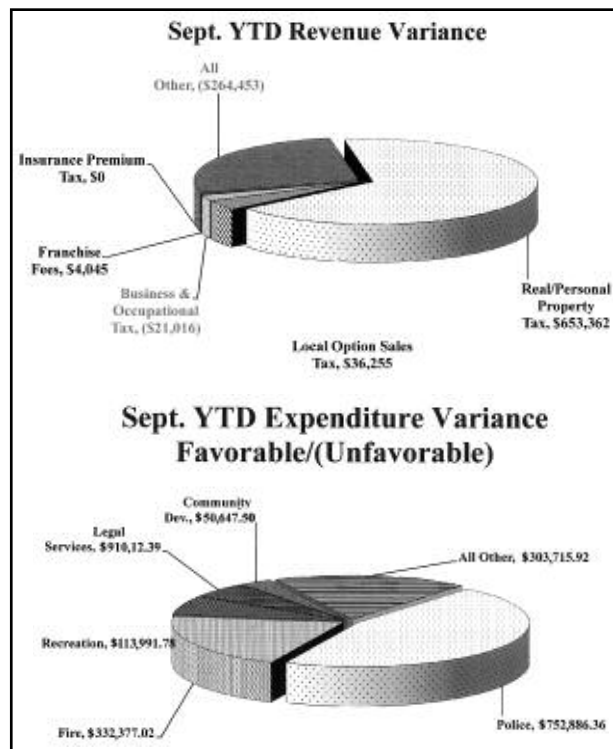
The latter State action has been disputed by State legislators, some of whom have promised that they would not permit the State homestead property tax relief program to lapse. The loss of the revenues to local governments would be severe and likely result in some jurisdictions having to raise taxes. Residents are urged to inform their legislators to save the State credits for property taxes in the 2009 Legislative session.

Sandy Springs is conservative in its fiscal policies. We are working with a reserve of \$14.5 million, which is there for the very purpose of covering revenue shortages. Moreover, the General Fund budget transfers out \$27 million for capital investments. These represent special projects, like intersection improvements or road projects. In a downturn they may have to be postponed, but this does not affect the basic package of city services.

The conclusion is that Sandy Springs, by being extremely judicious about its expenditures, will not have to cut normal services due to the economic downturn. However, certain investments may have to be postponed.

*Eva Galambos*

Mayor Eva Galambos, PhD  
City of Sandy Springs



*Hammond Park, continued from cover*

The City's consultant, EDAW, will present three conceptual plans for the aquatics facility to the steering committee for review, discussion and recommendation of a concept plan.

Residents will have more opportunities to comment on the Master Plan in the coming months. The next meeting will be held on January 21, 2009, and will consist of two sessions: one at 10:00 a.m. and another at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Multi-Purpose Room at the Hammond Park Gym.

Once recommendations are complete, the plans for Hammond Park will go to the Mayor and Council for approval.

## Contact Us

Sandy Springs Web site: [www.sandyspringsga.org](http://www.sandyspringsga.org)

Sandy Springs Citizen Response Center: 770.730.5600